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NATIONAL ABORIGINAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT BOARD TO PLAY STRENGTHENED ROLE IN ADVISING CANADA'S NEW GOVERNMENT

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CALGARY, ALBERTA (July 4, 2007) - Today, the Honourable Jim Prentice, Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development and Federal Interlocutor for Métis and Non-Status Indians met for the first time with the National Aboriginal Economic Development Board (NAEDB) executive members to discuss how the board can play a stronger role in the Government of Canada's new approach to Aboriginal economic development.

Minister Prentice named the new members and chairperson of the National Aboriginal Economic Development Board on April 26, 2007.

"Canada's New Government is working to create a more coherent and practical approach to increasing Aboriginal participation in the economy, capitalizing on a range of economic opportunities," said Minister Prentice. "As an arms-length, private-sector body representing the economic development interests of all Aboriginal people, the NAEDB is well positioned to play a key role as this work unfolds."

Chief Clarence Louie, the board's newly appointed Chairperson, welcomed the commitment made by Minister Prentice. Chief Louie is President and CEO of the Osoyoos Indian Band Development Corporation in British Columbia.

"No other body in Canada has the mandate we have to concentrate exclusively on Aboriginal economic development," said Chief Louie. "This is a critical priority if we want to solve a host of other issues for our people. Economic development is the cornerstone."

While the scope of the new approach is still in development, the board will provide advice on areas such as investment strategies, business creation, access to business capital, Aboriginal involvement in major projects, Aboriginal/non-Aboriginal partnerships, as well as policy development.

Other participants in the meeting were Nellie Cournoyea, former Premier of the Northwest Territories and Dawn Madahbee, Northern Ontario Aboriginal business leader involved in Aboriginal business financing and the tourism sector. Along with Chief Louie and Chief Jim Boucher, Chairman of the Board of the Fort McKay Group of Companies in Alberta, these nationally and internationally recognized individuals now serve as the Executive Committee of the NAEDB.

The National Aboriginal Economic Development Board is mandated by the federal Cabinet and members are appointed by Order-in-Council. The Board acts as a vital link between policy makers, legislators, government departments, and Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal business and community

leaders, providing counsel on all matters pertaining to Aboriginal economic development.

For more information about the NAEDB, visit the National Aboriginal Economic Development Board [\(external link, opens a new window\)](#) website.

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